

man increases his powers and perfects himself. If God held enclosed in his right hand all of Truth and in his left hand the eternal aspiration toward the Truth (with the certainty of never attaining it), and if he said to me: 'Choose!' I should humbly seize his left hand, saying: 'Give, Father, for pure Truth is intended only for thee.'

Truth belongs to God; the idea belongs to man. Certain people confuse ideas and truths. "Is it not true that truths are posterior to the ideas from which they are born?" (Leibniz: *Ncio Essays*.)

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"There is not a single temptation that God has sent you which is not human. And God, who is just, gives you also the strength to overcome them/* Thoughts are temptations; they are the temptations that come to us from God; they are born of the very pursuit of God. They are the temptations that we must overcome since they can be overcome. The other temptations (better named desires), which do not come from God but rather, when we are looking upon God, come to assail us from behind and turn us away from his contemplation, are not, I think, all capable of being suppressed. I do not understand how it could be good to seek too arduously and too long to stifle all of them; at least to seek it longer than is appropriate for a certain exercise of the will, and even that only during youth, for otherwise they would concern us too much and take on too much importance. You cannot get rid of them; the soul that at first gained strength in doing so is later exhausted in the attempt. They are natural desires, and when the young soul has resisted them long enough to be justifiably proud of itself, it should apply itself to silencing them or to taking advantage of them, for there is advantage in desires and advantage in the satisfaction of desires. But it is not good to excite desires by a too long resistance to them, for

the soul is thereby
unbalanced.

That is at least what I think today. One must at any
price manage to
free one's soul. The noble soul deserves higher
occupations. I know that
there are very noble souls that the love of God has
burned deeper than
any other desire; it would seem that that angelic ardor
had absorbed
the other flame, but then one is burned up too swiftly
and the reason
remains stunned. Sometimes it is a madness; more
often an ignorance.
I used to wish for such a madness, but I do not want it
now* I want to
honor God with every part of me, to seek him
everywhere and suppress
nothing with a view to a partial exaltation. It seems to
me that to do so
amounts to inadequate praying. Prayer is praise of God;
our whole life
is that constant prayer, and I wish to know no other; it
can be inspired
by love, by distress, or by humility. I should like it to
spring only from
love. Distress and humility come from a faltering
reason; I no longer